(c) and (d) Joining UPOV would be in the interest of our farmers as this would, *inter-alia,* facilitate greater investment in research for the development of new plant varieties; in order to ensure the availability of quality seeds to farmers; obviate the need to enter into a large number of bilateral agreements with other countries for mutual recognition of plant breeders' rights; enable Indian plant breeders to secure protection in all Convention countries with minimal formalities and costs, etc.

Utilization certificates for agricultural schemes

314. SHRI C.P. THIRUNAVUKKARASU: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is compulsory for the State Governments to submit utilization certificates, proposals and project reports to take benefits of the Centrally sponsored schemes for agricultural development;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) the State Governments which have not submitting reports regularly; and

(d) the steps taken by Government against such State Governments?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI HUKUMDEO NARAYAN YADAV): (a) to (d) The information is being obtained and will be laid on the Table of the House.

Export cost of agricultural products

315. DR. AKHILESH DAS:
SHRI AIMADUDDIN AHMED KHAN (DURRU):

Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether any new strategy has been evolved to reduce export cost of agricultural products, to provide direct assistance to farmers and make their products more competitive;

(b) if so, the details of the new strategy and how it marks an improvement over the earlier agri-exports strategy; and

(c) the improvement in agri-exports registered during the last three months, as compared to corresponding period last year?